

Nine Wonders around Shwedagon and More

1. Tawagu (Hsu Taung Pyit) Phayar (တဝဂ္ဂသုရား (ဆုတောင်းပြည့်)) / Tawagu Patamyar Myet-Shin Phayar (တဝဂ္ဂပတ္တမ္မရား မျက်ရှင်သုရား) / Patamyar Myet-Shin Phayar (ပတ္တမ္မရား မျက်ရှင်သုရား) - Built on the Eastern side of Shwedagon terrace*, at the Monday corner** it is a statue of the Buddha. This statue is very powerful in fulfilling a devotee's wishes. In the past kings and members of royal family ascended there, made their wishes and oaths to gain throne, and killing one another successfully gained kingship. Because of this, king Mindaya decided and made a rule that male members of royal family must not ascend to the Tawagu Phayar. It is also said that the entrance to Tawagu Phayar has been created in a (somewhat) secret place and many people prohibited access to prevent them from bad wishes that may then get fulfilled. I am very thankful to Ko Yay Yint Aung for his excellent photos right from the Shwedagon terrace.

* Terrace here means the round path on the extended lower portion of the pagoda, created at a higher level of the pagoda itself. Access to Shwedagon terrace is only for Burmese men with special permission. Burmese men who do not have special permission, foreigners, and Burmese women are not allowed to ascend to the pagoda's terrace. Note also that women are often prohibited from ascending pagodas and touching Buddha statues - because it is not suitable that a woman would touch a monk or Buddha, even their image. This is because the Buddha and monks are strictly celibate, they avoid contact with women. See the bottom of this document for the photo of the entrance to the Shwedagon terrace from the Shwedagon precincts.

** Note that Burmese pagodas, Shwedagon being no exception, have their "corners". These corners are named according to days in week and serve as little shrines for the Burmese who believe in astrology. These approach the corner that represents their week-day of birth, and make their prayers there.



Tawagu Phayar



The room in which Tawagu Phayar is placed



Upon the Shwedagon terrace, facing the room where Tawagu Phayar is placed



Tawagu Phayar on screen in Le-Pe-Le Phayar, broadcasted from the Shwedagon terrace to the Shwedagon precincts



Looking at the direction of Tawagu Phayar placed at the terrace of Shwedagon.

2. Weikzar Zawgyi Phayar (ဝိဇ္ဇာဇော်ဘုရား) - Near the Saturday corner, see the little wizards on the upper side of the small (white) stupa. It is known that this statue of Buddha (the one right below the wizards' statues) was created by occult sciences. In Yin-Khwin-Lan blog I found a mention, that at this statue there is always a flower offered. Regardless at what time you wake up early and come with a flower, there will be another flower already offered.



Weikzar Zawgyi Phayar from afar



Weikzar Zawgyi Phayar



Wizard statues above the Buddha statue

3. Hsu-Taung Pyi Phayar (ဆုတောင်းပြည့်ဘုရား) / Ba-Lay-Ba Phayar (ဘားလေးဘားဘုရား) / Shin Saw Pu Phayar (ရှင်စောပုဘုရား) - Beside the large pavilion at the Sun corner (ရာဟူထောင့်). Nearby should be several species of magnolia or similar to magnolia. (YKL blog mentions, that here plants bloom 12 months a year; note that Hsu-Taung Pyi Phayar (ဆုတောင်းပြည့်ဘုရား) means 'Lord of fulfilled wishes', indicating that prayers uttered there are not in vain.)



Hsu-Taung Pyi Phayar from afar



Hsu-Taung Pyi Phayar

4. Shin Ma Hti Phayar (ရှင်မထီးဘုရား) / Shin Ma Hti Dazaung (ရှင်မထီးတန်ဆောင်) - There's the 'Big Brother Shwedagon' (နောင်တော်ကြီးဘုရား) pagoda, a large gilded pagoda at the Sunday corner of Shwedagon pagoda. Looking north from there you may see a Buddha statue in a pavilion. It is known that 1000 years ago Shin Ma Hti Sayadaw (ရှင်မထီးဆရာတော်) made and worshipped this statue. (YKL blog adds that it is possible to gain intelligence/wisdom by praying at this statue. The sayadaw lived in Bagan era, at the time of king Pyu-Zaw-Hti (ပျူဇောထီးမင်း) and his book Shin-Ma-Hti-Kyam (ရှင်မထီးကျမ်း) has been much studied by wizards).



Shin Ma Hti Phayar from afar



Shin Ma Hti Phayar

5. Shin Izzagona Phayar (ရှင်အဇ္ဈကောသလ) - from the Big Brother Shwedagon at the Shwedagon pagoda's Sunday corner, look south at the small pavilion with narrow path among a number of Buddha statues. The statue is little bit hidden in the left corner at the backside, but there's a board with the name (in Burmese) and the statue is recognizable by the small and larger (wider) eye. It was made by a wizard-monk. In Bagan era, at the time of the king Thamodarit (သမုဒ္ဒရာဇ်မင်း), this monk was known to be able to make rain gold and silver. In ancient parabaiks* is recorded that he made this gold and silver rain to help people (from poverty). The king (for reason not mentioned) removed the wizard's eyes. The monk asked his apprentice to throw away the monk's *dhalone* (magic-sphere) in latrine. There the magic-sphere made powerful light and spectacle. When the monk learned about this, he asked to get his magic-sphere back. With help of it he inserted goat (izza) and cow (goṇa) eyes in his eye-sockets, upon which he regained sight. Just like he had therefore uneven eyes, he made the Buddha statue with different eye sizes.

* Ola leaves or metal desks inscribed with text.



The pavilion of Shin Izzagona Phayar (statue is hidden at the left side)



Shin Izzagona Phayar (at the left side a man paints another statue)

6. Hsan-Daw-Dwinn Yote-Pwar-Daw (ဆံတော်တွင်း ရုပ်ပွားတော်) - placed in the pavilion in the northern portion of Shwedagon precincts. It is west from the Mahabodhi Zedi built by Dagon Khin Khin Lay (ဒဂုံခင်ခင်လေး). Here the Hair Relic of the Buddha was washed before it was enshrined in the Shwedagon pagoda. Ayeyawaddy river has it's stream and underground water here. The pavilion was built in 1879 AD, closing thus an underground tunnel to the water source. People say that in full-moon and new-moon days it is possible to hear sound of water right there.



Hsan-Daw-Dwinn Yote-Pwar-Daw – behind this statue ought to be the entrance to the underground tunnel



Hsan-Daw-Dwinn Yote-Pwar-Daw

7. Bo Bo Aung Phayar (ဘိုးဘိုးအောင်ဘုရား) - It is a statue of Buddha kept and worshiped in a pavilion near the Eastern entrance to Shwedagon (in Shwedagon pagoda precincts). Since the beginning it has been told, that this statue was made by the (very famous) wizard Bo Bo Aung (ဘိုးဘိုးအောင်). This pavilion is built with its backside stuck to the backside of the Dhammazedi king's Kaunghmu-Zedidaw pagoda. Our guide, Shwedagon guard Ko Yay Yint Aung, shared with me that behind this statue is a secret entrance to the underground passage, which leads right to the relics of the previous Buddhas kept under the Shwedagon Pagoda.



Pavilion of Bo Bo Aung Phayar



Bo Bo Aung Phayar Statue at the backside

8. La-Pa-La Phayar (လတ်ပတ်လတ်ဘုရား) / Labha Muni Phayar (လာဘ်မုနိဘုရား) - it is placed in the pavilion seen from Eastern entrance, it is the statue of Kakusandha Buddha. (Note that the Shwedagon Pagoda is covered from four sides by four large pavilions with their respective Buddha statues (Gotama Buddha, Kassapa Buddha, Konagamana Buddha, and the Kakusandha Buddha). These statues of Kakusandha Buddha were made with right hand's palm turned upwards. (My sources do not explain why it was made so.) (YKL blog adds recommendation to pray here for good health if you have a health issue. Note that "*Labha Muni*" means "Master of Gain", perhaps indicating that prayers for material health were also not in vain here. It may also explain why the statues' hands are palms-up, i.e. indicating Buddha's generosity.)



Pavilion of La-Pa-La Phayar (Buddha Kakusandha)



La-Pa-La Phayar (Buddha Kakusandha)

9. Pya-Dar Shin Phayar (ပြာရှင်နာရ) - It is a bronze statue in south entrance to a pagoda, and this pagoda is between the Eastern entrance to Shwedagon and the Tuesday corner. The sculpture's appearance is very detailed and well proportioned. In the statue's bulged forehead there is deposited a mercury magic-sphere (ဩဇာရွှေလုံး). Because of the excellent artistic precision in this statue's appearance, many people believe that this is how the true Gotama Buddha looked like, and often-times they have extraordinary feelings of joy and happiness when paying respects to this statue.



Location of Pya-Dar Shin Phayar



Pya-Dar Shin Phayar

Apart from these nine, there are many more interesting images of the Buddha and pagodas:

A) Paw Taw Mu Phayar (ပေါ်တော်မူဘုရား) – A statue that arose all by itself. There are more such pagodas around the world, such as the Swayambu Nath in Nepal's Kathmandu, but that one is very large. This little pagoda arose already gilded, with its pennant-shaped vane at the top, and Buddha-carvings throughout the not-gilded base. The pagoda arose like this several decades ago. (Our guide told us that the bells and the plastic pennant were added by people.)



Paw Taw Mu Phayar (whole)



Paw Taw Mu Phayar (top)



Paw Taw Mu Phayar (base)

B) Kyauk Myet-Si Phayar (ကျွန်းမြတ်စီဘုရား) - a little statue of the Buddha with "stone eyes" which seem as if they were real. When we came, the eyes were already covered by a golden leaf. Our guide willingly removed that gold so that we can see the eyes better :-).



Kyauk Myet-Si Phayar inside a little chamber



Kyauk Myet-Si Phayar

C) Dhammazedi Phayar (ဓမ္မဇေတိဘုရား) – this is an image of the Buddha made by the order of the king Dhammazedi. Prayers in front of this statue are reportedly often fulfilled, said Ko Yay Yint Aung. It is therefore also given the title "hsu-taung-pyi" (ဆုတောင်းပြည့်), which means "fulfilling requested favors".



Placement of Dhammazedi Phayar



Dhammazedi Phayar

D) According to YKL blog there's also **Nayla Phayar (နေလဘုရား)** where reportedly somebody held two hornets (or wasps) in hands and expressed his wishes. (Photo by Ko Yay Yint Aung.)



Nayla Phayar

See here is the (somewhat) secret well-guarded entrance to the terrace of Shwedagon Pagoda:



Sources:

1. "ထူးခြားပြည့်စုံသော ရွှေတိဂုံစေတီတော်သမိုင်း", ဦးညွန့်ဝေ, သစ္စာမဏိဂြိုဟ်စာပေ, 1989 [second edition], pp. 153-160.
2. http://yinkhwinlam.blogspot.com/2013/09/blog-post_9378.html (retrieved on 22nd of September, 2015)
3. "ရွှေတိဂုံစေတီတော် သမိုင်း" (Shwedagon History) cartoon book, Myo Man and Kyaw Moe Zaw (မျိုးမာန်နှင့် ကျော်မိုးဇော်), Myint Mor Meme Sape (မြင့်မိုရ်မေဓဇ စာပေ), 2014.

I owe great thanks to Ko Yay Yint Aung (ကိုရဲရင့်အောင်), our guide (local guard) in Shwedagon precincts, who willingly showed us all of the nine wonders there and even more than that. Big portion of the photos were taken with iPad of Ma Zin Mar (မခင်မာ), much thanks for that too.

May you be happy,
monk Sarana (Czech)
3rd of November, 2015